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An Analysis of Special Education Provisions for Mentally Retarded Children in 23 Negro Public Schools in Southeastern Texas

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**AN ANALYSIS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROVISIONS FOR MENTALLY
RETARDED CHILDREN IN 23 NEGRO PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN
SOUTHEASTERN TEXAS**



WILLIAM JOSEPH, JR.

1959

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MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN IN 23 NEGRO PUBLIC
SCHOOLS IN SOUTHEASTERN TEXAS

by
William Joseph, Jr.

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A Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfillment
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In the

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of

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This Thesis For The Master of Science Degree

by

William Joseph, Jr.

Has been approved by the

Department of Education

by

Dean of Graduate Study

[REDACTED]

Head of Department of Education

[REDACTED]

Advisor

8-24-59

Date

DEDICATION

The writer wishes to dedicate this thesis to his devoted mother, Mrs. Bertha Joseph, without whose sacrifices and encouragement this manuscript could not have been written; and to his nephew, John Anthony Clark of Compton, California, who became an orthopedically handicapped child as a result of his having been a victim of poliomyelitis at the age of eighteen months.

W.J.J.

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- 1) The Superintendents of the following districts in southeastern Texas: Beaumont, Galveston, Houston, Aldine-Houston, La Marque, Orange, Port Arthur and Texas City.

- 2) The teachers of mentally retarded children who carefully completed the questionnaire forms which were used to obtain the study data.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The work at hand developed from an abiding interest in children, especially those who are exceptional in one way or another and, therefore, need special provisions for optimum adjustment.

This interest was deepened during the writer's student teaching experiences, and again during the summer of 1957 when contact with an instructor of special classes visiting Prairie View A. and M. College proved to be stimulating. It was following this period, after the requirements for a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education were successfully completed, that the decision to pursue a Master's program in Special Education began to shape itself.

It is now an objective of the writer to prepare himself to assume responsibilities as a teacher of mentally retarded children. The present study is one product of that orientation. It was conducted in order that richer insights into actual public school programs for mentally retarded children in Texas might be obtained.

B. Statement of the Problem

This study was designed to investigate representative special classes, or units, with educational provisions for mentally retarded children in eight public school districts in southeastern Texas. The purpose of the study was five-fold:

- (1) To determine the extent to which special education provisions for mentally retarded children are found in the districts in question and to determine the procedures used to identify mentally retarded children.
- (2) To examine the types of physical facilities, curricula materials, administrative arrangements and instructional techniques utilized.
- (3) To note the characteristics of the teachers who have assumed the responsibility of working with mentally retarded children (professional and personal competencies).
- (4) To determine the adequacy of educational provisions for this exceptional group of youngsters.
- (5) To compare the extent to which the programs investigated parallel the standards endorsed by the Texas State Department of Education.

C. Significance of the Problem

"Inherent in the philosophy of democratic education is the doctrine that every child is entitled to an education related to the limit of his capacity.¹" The education

¹
The Forty-Ninth Yearbook Of The National Society For The Study Of Education, Part II The Education Of Exceptional Children (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), p. 3.

of exceptional children in the public schools of America represents an attempt on the part of educators--and the people in general--to furnish equal educational opportunity to individuals who differ in their mental, physical, social, and emotional characteristics from what is considered "normal" or average. Everyone in a democratic society is entitled to security in respect of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness;" and this perspective includes not only children with average or above average talent, but also those with low intelligence, those with physical handicaps, and those with handicaps of a social and emotional nature. In a democratic society, all have equal rights to life's satisfactions.

Children are all entitled to an equal opportunity to grow and develop despite their individual differences. No group of children should be neglected. The needs, interests, and capacities of each must be considered just as important as the needs of every other. All kinds of physical handicaps, mental handicaps or intellectual brilliance, emotional disturbances and social maladjustments are matters deserving of attention. It is the responsibility of public education to see that these exceptionalities are given the attention they are due if we expect all persons in society to be assets in the perfection of human culture.

The present study seeks to determine the extent to which this ideal of education in a democratic society is being approached in a selected area of the state of Texas.

D. Scope and Limitations of the Study

In the development of this study information on special education programs for mentally retarded children at 23 schools (19 at the elementary and 4 at the junior high level) in 8 public school districts of southeastern Texas was gathered. The schools were all Negro institutions² located in the following school districts: Aldine (Houston), Beaumont, Galveston, Houston, La Marque, Orange, Port Arthur, and Texas City.

Because of limited financial resources, a restricted period of study, transportation difficulties and other pressures related to employment obligations, it was not deemed feasible to attempt a more ambitious undertaking. The findings uncovered in this study are therefore restricted to the schools and the relatively small geographical area in southeastern Texas identified above.

2

At the writing of this thesis, the public school districts identified here had not yet effected integration in compliance with the U. S. Supreme Court ruling of May, 1954 outlawing segregation in the nation's public schools.

Furthermore, the investigation did not concern itself with a detailed examination of teachers' records or other forms used in the programs in question; nor was any attempt made to evaluate the special classes on a formal and exact basis.

E. Procedure and Sources of Data

During April, 1959, superintendents in the several cities of Texas mentioned above were mailed communications* designed to solicit permission to gather data in their respective school systems through: (1) The distribution of a questionnaire to teachers of mentally retarded children. (2) Possible visitations in classroom units for the mentally retarded. This letter also requested the names and addresses of the Negro Elementary Schools (and Principals) in the respective school districts which have special provisions for mentally retarded children.

Subsequently, a number of visitations were arranged with administrative and teaching personnel employed at the schools with special units. Form I, Instrument to be Used During Interviews with Teachers of the Mentally Retarded Children,* was then constructed to facilitate the recording of data obtained doing these visitations.

*

See Appendix

Thereafter, a rather detailed questionnaire (Form II, Questionnaire for Teachers of the Mentally Retarded*) and an accompanying letter* were prepared and sent to teachers of special classes for mentally retarded children in order that the data which constitute the base of this study might be more "formally" secured.

Valuable supplementary information was obtained from the Division of Special Education, Texas Education Agency, Austin, Texas; from a comprehensive review of available literature addressed to the subject of special education provisions for mentally retarded children and youth; and from other learning experiences provided in the graduate classes at Prairie View A. and M. College, Prairie View, Texas.

F. Defintion of Terms

1. Exceptional children-Children who deviate from the average or normal in physical, mental, emotional, or social characteristics to such an extent that they require special educational services in order to develop to their maximum capacity.³

³ The Forty-Ninth Yearbook, Part II, op cit., p. 3.

*
See Appendix

Exceptional children include the mentally retarded (trainable and educable), mentally gifted, emotionally disturbed, social mal-adjusted, the deaf and hard of hearing, the blind and partially seeing, those with speech defects, orthopedics, and children with lowered vitality.

2. Special education-That form of education designed to meet the needs of exceptional educable children who, because of severe physical or mental deviation, can not function in regular classes of the public school without provisions or services additional to or different from⁴ those provided in the regular program.

3. Educable mentally retarded-Children who are unable to utilize their intellectual assets in such a way as to make possible their development in the regular classroom, but may be expected to profit from special education facilities designed to make each child economically useful⁵ and socially adjusted⁵—and whose intelligence

⁴

State Plan For Special Education (Austin: Texas Education Agency, Revised, 1957), p. 2.

⁵

Ibid., p. 2.

quotients fall in the range from 70 or 75 to 50.⁶

4. Trainable mentally retarded--Those children between the ages of 6 and 17 years who, because of deficient intellectual development as determined by individual examination given by a qualified psychological examiner, are incapable of being educated properly and efficiently through ordinary classroom instruction or special education facilities for educable mentally handicapped children, but who, may be expected to benefit from training in a more sheltered group setting designed to further their social adjustment and economic usefulness in their homes or in a sheltered environment⁷ --and whose I.Q.'s fall in the range from 50 to 25.⁸

5. Mental deficiency (or severe mental retardation)--A state of incomplete mental development of such a kind and degree that the individual is incapable of adapting himself to the normal

⁶ Samuel A. Kirk, Educating The Retarded Child (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1951), p. 5.

⁷ State Plan For Special Education, op. cit., p. 3.

⁸ Samuel A. Kirk, op. cit., p. 5.

environment of his fellows in such a way as to maintain existence independly of supervision, control, or external support.⁹

6. Mentally handicapped-Persons who are victims of some form of mental retardation and who can profit from special programs in the public schools.¹⁰

G. Review of Literature

Several interesting contributions to the field of special education have highlighted the importance of the interdisciplinary approach in the identification and diagnosis of prospective candidates for special classes in public schools. Suggested steps to be taken by the school psychologist in conducting a basic assessment for placement in special programs for the mentally retarded have been outlined by Leo F. Cain as follows:

1. When referrals are made that are suspected cases of mental retardation, the school psychologist should have available all possible resources of the school in considering such referrals. These resources should include results of group screening tests, teachers and administrator judgements, report on class and school achievement records, and any reports prepared

9

Ibid., p. 8.

10

Ibid., p. 9.

by physicans, nurses or social workers.

2. Ample time should be provided for individual conferences and interviews with the child and for the administering of pertinent examinations.

3. Arrange for interviews with the parent or guardians of the children referred as well as with the school personnel who will be directly concerned with the child.

4. Assemble a complete file of information on the individual student.

5. Provide an effective means so that all persons working on the case can carry on follow up. If the psychologist is working as a member of a team, he should have his material prepared so that it might be integrated with all other material used by the team.

These data, carefully prepared can do much toward strengthening the educational programs for retarded children in our schools.¹¹

Charles Bradley's article "Interdisciplinary Team-work in Special Education" discusses the form of a cooperative approach to a handicapped child's problems and to plans leading to the solution of problems posed by children with a need for special education.

He states that the initial activities of a comprehensive special education program should consist of three

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Leo F. Cain, "Basic Assessment By The School Psychologist," The Training School Bulletin, Vol. LIX No. 9 (January, 1956), pp. 219-220.

major components: (1) Children with special needs must be identified and located, (2) The child with a special problem must be diagnosed and (3) Plans must be made for providing special instruction and treatment.

Bradley also proposed seven facts of interdisciplinary teamwork:

1. The necessity for leadership.
2. The necessity for adequate communication.
3. The necessity that team members know one another's functions.
4. The necessity that team members be aware of what instructional facilities are available.
5. The desirability of considering parents as members of the interdisciplinary team.
6. The desirability of including research workers as active members of the team.
7. The necessity of education for team members.¹²

Some suggestions as to the directions in which fundamental research might be oriented and examples of recently acquired information having a direct bearing upon the problem of mental retardation have been outlined by Carleton J. Marinus as follows:

12

Charles Bradley, "Interdisciplinary Teamwork In Special Education," Exceptional Children, Vol. XXIII No. 1 (October, 1956), pp. 5-9.

1. Study of the parents' history before the child's conception. For example, Rh incompatibility potentially interferes with normality in the mental as well as physical field. Other factors which are conceivably capable of producing anemia, chronic infection, endocrine status.

2. Study of the first trimester of pregnancy. Certain virus infections occurring during the first trimester of pregnancy permanently damage nerve tissues. German measles in the mother frequently causes deafness or blindness in the child.

3. Study of the second trimester of pregnancy. Certain bacterial infections during this period predispose to the development of congenital malformations, including those of the central nervous system.

4. The third trimester of pregnancy introduces new problems which have not yet been adequately studied. It is not known that the toxemia of the last three months of pregnancy have a harmful effect upon the mental development of the child. During this time certain mechanical difficulties may occur such as pelvic disproportion, abnormal position of the fetus.

5. The period of delivery and the immediate post natal period have recently had more study, and it is increasingly admitted that this is the time of extreme danger to the mental development of the child.¹³

14

According to Fouracre, effective education and train-

13

Carleton J. Marinus, "Physical Factors In Mental Retardation," Exceptional Children, Vol. XX No. 3 (December, 1953), pp. 124-130.

14

Maurice H. Fouracre, "Planning For The Mentally Retardate," Journal Of Home Economic, Vol. LVI No. 4 (April, 1954), pp. 231-232.

ing for the mentally retarded hinges on the following facts: (1) The teacher must accept the child with mental limitations and be willing to assist that child in learning to acquire basic skills, (2) the program of training must be realistic and functional, (3) the parents must be made aware of the child's potentialities and impressed not to magnify the child's limitations, (4) the child must participate in activities commensurate with her abilities in order that the feeling of accomplishment and success can be gained, and (5) supervised work experience should be provided in close cooperation with the school program.

Below is a brief summary of the essentials of a point-of-view for those who work with "the handicapped" as proposed by Harold Lilly White:

15

1. An accurate and honest view of ourselves as a point from which to view others.
2. A point-of-view of others would include:
 - a. The maturity to withhold judgement, the delay of valuation until he understands the persons and the facts involved.

15

Harold Lilly White, "A Point of View For Those Working With The Handicapped," Exceptional Children, Vol. XXV No. 3 (November, 1958), p. 105.

- b. The courage to be silent and try to listen from the other person's view point.
- c. The wisdom to go behind labels, to communicate with the person behind the word.
- d. The insight of viewing the whole child instead of just a handicap itself.
- e. The skill to communicate at an operational level, to recognize and control the levels of communication.

It is White's view that it is imperative, that teachers have a point of view that will enable them to develop accurate concepts in working with the handicapped children.

It is interesting to note that in countries other than the United States increasing attention is also being directed toward the adjustment of exceptional children. In Canada, for example, an interest in exceptional children has increased rapidly in the past few years. In both lay and professional circles persons have become more and more aware that children who deviate markedly from the normal in mental, social, or physical traits need specialized educational services. This is a finding discussed in the article identified below which deals with the special services provided for exceptional children by Canadian local school

16
systems. Facilities are provided for the mentally handicapped, the mentally gifted, visually handicapped, acoustically handicapped, socially and emotionally disturbed, children with crippling and special health conditions and speech handicapped children.

The United States Office of Education in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, in 1952 conducted a nation wide study, under the title "Qualifications and Preparation of Teachers of Exceptional Children." One phase of this investigation focused upon teachers of mentally retarded children. In order to throw light on questions such as the following, "What are the specialized competencies that the teacher of the mentally retarded should have? What types of experiences might contribute most to the development of these competencies?" (which are involved in securing well qualified teachers) leaders in the field have considered it necessary to analyze some of the elements essential to adequate professional preparation:

This report presents national opinion of recognized professional workers in the field

on the special competencies required of teachers of the mentally retarded and on some of the professional experiences that may be needed in developing these competencies.¹⁷

The basic findings of the study were:

1. The various competences associated with teachers of retarded children fell into certain rather well-defined groupings. These included personal characteristics, understanding the mentally retarded child, curriculum, methods and materials of instruction.

2. The teachers emphasized the following general types of competency: understanding the retarded child in a general and practical rather than a highly technical and theoretical way, with special emphasis on understanding social and emotional development and causes of maladjustment. Ability to interpret tests, social work, and other diagnostic data, and the ability to participate in "teamwork" with other agencies were emphasized over ability to perform all these services personally. Especially interesting was the finding that the ability to teach the three R's effectively was given precedence over skills in teaching handwork, homemaking, and expressive activities. Socialization through unit teaching and participation in group activities and community type experiences was emphasized. There was less emphasis on highly specialized competencies in all areas, including some specialized teaching procedures.

3. Self-evaluations of proficiency produced the following results. The teachers tended to rate themselves as more proficient on the more important competencies. There was evidence to indicate that the teachers (1) felt that there had been too much stress on theory and on testing (2) expressed doubt about their proficiency in

a number of very important and difficult diagnostic and technical procedures.

4. All groups were in favor of teaching experience with normal children while the majority favored up to 3 year's experience in regular classroom teaching; student teaching only was considered sufficient by many.

5. All groups in this report recommended that colleges and universities proposing to offer a sequence of preparation for teachers of the mentally retarded children provide facilities for student teaching with mentally retarded children of various ages and degrees of mental retardation.

6.. Since the teachers and others thought that their preparation had not included sufficient orientation in the education of other types of exceptional children further emphasis should be given to these areas in the teachers' preparation.

An interesting article by Kate appeared in a recent issue of Exceptional Children. The purpose of the study reported on by Kate was threefold: (1) To determine the social position of the mentally retarded child in the regular grades in a public school system that also provided public school special classes for mentally retarded children; (2) to determine the relationship of other factors

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Willie Kate "The Social Position of The Educable Mentally Retarded Child in Regular Grades in The Public Schools," Exceptional Children, Vol. XXV No. 3 (November, 1958), pp. 106 -108.

to his position; and (3) to see whether in these findings there existed any implications for educational planning.

Some questions that this study sought to explore were:

- (1) To what extent were the educable mentally retarded children in regular grades of the public school accepted socially;
- (2) What was the social position of the children of different levels of mental retardation, of chronological age, of public school grade level, and of social economic status;
- and (3) What desirable or undesirable characteristics seemed to be related to the degree of social acceptance of the mentally retarded child?

In short, the findings in this study showed that the mentally retarded children who were in the fourth grade, the fifth grade, or the sixth grade in the public schools in this metropolitan area, in May, 1956, were less accepted socially by their classmates than were the non-mentally retarded children in these grades.

19

It has been reported that Fields¹⁹ chaired an excellent discussion on the topic of the desirable characteristics of the teacher of mentally retarded children several

19

H. Fields, "Who Makes The Best Teachers of Mentally Retarded Children?" American Journal of Mental Deficiency, Vol. XXX No. 6 (March, 1953), pp. 58, 251-267.

years ago. The following is a brief summarization of some of the major ideas developed by the discussion group. The panelists stressed that the teacher should:

1. Be in sympathy with the philosophy of education for the retarded child.
2. Be an emotionally well-balanced person.
3. Have certain specific traits, such as humor, tact, vitality, patience, sympathy, good personal appearance, originality and creativity, good physical health, and have skills in planning and organizing.
4. Be accepting and understanding of children.
5. Have good interpersonal relationships with others.
6. Be willing to ask for and accept help.
7. Have adequate training.
8. Know the following specific things: the nature of mental retardation, the nature of the world in which the retarded must live, the things necessary to live in such a world, the way to teach these things effectively.

Worthy of note is the observation that at the Mission Senior High School in San Francisco, there are seven special teacher-counselors who work with mentally retarded pupils in a "partially separate" educational program. However,

20

20

Letty M. Wickliffe, "Reports From The Field-Descriptions of Programs in Action," The Bulletin of The National Association of Secondary-School Principals, Vol. XXIX No. 207 (January, 1955), p. 51.

the 45 students (C.A. 14-18, I.Q. 48-75) attend certain elective courses in the regular programs of this school. Eight experience areas are included in the "special" curriculum. They are as follow: (1) language arts communications; (2) health and hygiene; (3) local government and social living; (4) home-making, cooking, and sewing; (5) home repair shop; (6) photostating and photography; (7) general in-school work experience and outside part-time experience, including job placement and supervision; and (8) counseling. Interesting is the observation that the "core" of this adjustment program is adequate life habits and vocational training.

Pathological illness is only one of many symptoms of personality maladjustment found among retarded children.
 21
 Schubert catalogued the symptoms manifested by 100 cases (22) of reading disability found by Gates in the following way:

1. Nervous tensions and habits (stuttering, nail-biting restlessness, insomnia)-10 cases.

21

Delwyn G. Schubert, "Emotional and Personality Problems of Retarded Reader," Exceptional Children, Vol. XX No. 5 (February, 1954), pp. 226-228.

(22)

I. A. Gates "Failure In Reading and Social Adjustment," Journal of the National Association (October, 1936), pp. 77-83.

2. Putting on bold front as a defense reaction, loud talk, defiant conduct-16 cases.

3. Retreat reactions such as withdrawal from ordinary associations, joining outside gangs, and truancy-14 cases.

4. Counter attack: mischief in school, playing practical jokes, thefts, cruelty, bullying-18 cases.

5. Withdrawing reactions mind-wandering and day-dreaming-26 cases.

6. Extreme self-consciousness, becoming easily injured, blushing, developing peculiar fads and frills and eccentricities, inferiority feelings-33 cases.

7. Give-up or submissive adjustment as shown by in attentiveness, indifference, apparent laziness-35 cases.

It should perhaps be mentioned here that while articles such as the one mentioned above do not relate specifically to the problems of mentally retarded children, since any kind of retardation is a complex and many-sided phenomenon, there is some indirect justification for the inclusion of the above review in the thesis at hand.

There have been some very interesting studies of special class teacher-child interactions. One of these was done by Samuel A. Kirk,²³ who suggests that in many

23

Samuel A. Kirk, and G. O. Johnson, Educating The Retarded Child (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1951), pp. 357-58.

cases the retarded child is able to assume responsibility for his own behavior if given adequate guidance. Kirk has summarized this position with respect to the best teaching approach to mentally retarded children in the statements that follow:

1. Teaching procedures should be organized in harmony with good mental hygiene principles.
2. The child's attention should be focused through positive suggestions and a positive classroom atmosphere of acceptable social behavior.
3. The retarded child should be allowed to plan activities within the range of his interests and abilities.
4. Techniques such as sociodrama should be used for the purpose of developing insights in practical life situations.
5. Self-determining activities should be organized to give children practice in the independent management of their affairs.

Harry J. Baker in his widely-used and very comprehensive²⁴ reference in the field of Special Education, points out several ways in which retarded children are backward:

They show a tendency to stereotyped answers by repeating the same response to different questions; they lack powers of self-criticism; their powers of association are limited; they are unable to keep unusual instructions in mind, but return

²⁴

Harry J. Baker, Introduction To Exceptional Children (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1953), pp. 258-259.

to traditional methods; they fail to detect errors and absurdities in statements and in commonplace situations; they tend to have concrete abilities rather than abstract; they have limited powers of reasoning, visualization, and similar mental traits.

Each of Baker's chapters which deal with retarded children in one way or another (Chapter XV on "The Slow Learning" and Chapter XVI on "The Mentally Subnormal and the Feeble Minded," is interesting and informative with respect to several dimensions of the field of education for the mentally retarded.

This same observation can also be directed toward such "standard" works in the field as: Cruikshank and Johnson, Education of the Mentally Retarded Child and Youth; Featherstone, Teaching the Slow Learner; Hutt and Gibby, The Mentally Retarded Child; Magnifico, Education of the Exceptional Child; and Ingram, Education of the Slow Learning Child.**

Since the study at hand is concerned with programs for retarded children in certain of the public schools of Texas, it is interesting to note the historical background to developments in the field of Special Education

**

Bibliographical data on these works are found in the Bibliography at the end of this manuscript.

for the Mentally Retarded Child in the public schools of Texas as it has been described by Irene Westmoreland. This consultant in the Division of Special Education of the Texas Education Agency states that special education provisions for other exceptional children had begun officially in Texas in 1945. During the school term of 1945-46, twenty units providing education for children with orthopedic handicaps, children with deficient vision, children with deficient hearing and children with speech disorders were organized. Now the retarded child, who had not been included in the special programs, was to have services to help him develop to his optimum capacity also.

As soon as the new bill was signed into law, the Division of Special Education in the Texas Education Agency set up criteria for organizing and operating classes for these children. It was suggested that a minimum of ten children be used as the basis upon which to form a unit (or class) in Special Education. Admission to the unit was to be made only after a careful study of the individual child had been completed. In this study con-

siderations were to be given to the social, physical, and mental factors of each individual and no one person was to have sole responsibility for the decision regarding his placement in a class. The parent, classroom teacher, special teacher, principal, and superintendent constituted the placement committee which was to be assisted by a psychologist and/or family physician in making final decisions. In the fall of the 1951-52 school year, forty-two classes for retarded children were organized and operated in various schools over the State of Texas. Today, after lowering the minimum number necessary for class organization from ten to eight, and finally to five, there are more than several hundred classes in Texas in which retarded boys and girls can enter into activities in keeping with their limitations, interests, abilities, and needs.

Additional information of interest and value is discussed in detail in a second pamphlet published by the Texas Association for Retarded Children under the Title "A Place of Their Own: The Texas Story of Work For and²⁵ With the Mentally Retarded." This publication attempts

to illustrate through localized case histories current work in progress in the various councils throughout the State of Texas. Actually, it is a follow up report of the first edition of "Texas Story" (cited previously) which was published in 1955.

In Chapter II of the Manuscript at hand various organizational and administrative aspects of special education programs for retarded children in the public schools of Texas are considered in more detail.

H. Organization of the Thesis

The remainder of the thesis at hand consists of five chapters.

Chapter II is entitled "Guiding Principles for the Development of Public School Special Education Programs for Mentally Retarded Children as Outlined at the State Level in Texas." It presents organizational and administrative standards to be employed in establishing and maintaining special classes for retarded children in the public schools of Texas.

Chapters III, IV, and V are each devoted to particular aspects of the findings of the study. They are concerned respectively, with: "The Identification, Diagnosis, Assignment, and Adjustment of Candidates for the Special Classes Studied," "The Instructional Program and Education

Facilities for Mentally Retarded Children," and "The Education of Teachers of Special Classes and Selected Administrative Aspects of the Programs Investigated." In these three chapters, the findings of the study are analyzed in a free-flowing narrative style, rather than by means of a more formalistic statistical presentation in the interest of both ready comprehension and wholistic clarity.

The culminating chapter, "Summary and Final Considerations," consists of three major parts: A. Summary of Principal Findings, B. General Evaluative Statement Relative to the Programs Investigated, and C. Culminating Observations and Recommendations.

Following the Bibliography at the end of the manuscript is an Appendix consisting principally of sample copies of the letters and questionnaire forms used in the study.

CHAPTER II

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR MEN- TALLY RETARDED CHILDREN AS OUTLINED AT THE STATE LEVEL IN TEXAS

The data presented in the following chapters were assembled as a result of an investigation into representative special education provisions for mentally retarded children found in eight public school districts of southeastern Texas. The concern of the present chapter has to do with the guide lines and standards furnished by the Texas Education Agency in the interest of facilitating the organization and administration of public school provisions for children who are mentally retarded.

A. Philosophical Justification

The following statement captures the premise upon which rest the various public school programs for exceptional children in Texas:

The establishment of a special program is based upon the recognition that there are wide ranges of differences in children and youth--differences in their physical, mental, and social need. It is the responsibility of the public schools of Texas to provide an educational

program for all children who are educable.¹

It is believed that the special education program should provide for each of its pupils, according to his environment and ability, the opportunity to develop and achieve to his capacity-mentally, physically, socially, morally and spiritually. The special education program's effort should be directed to the end that each individual will become an effective member of our American democratic society, capable and desirous of making a definite and positive contribution to society.

B. Purposes of Special Program for Mentally Retarded

Children in Texas

The objectives of special education programs provided for educable mentally retarded children are designed to teach them to live in their environment. This program will of necessity emphasize developing and learning satisfactory social adjustment and relationships, physical competencies and desirable health habits, the wise use of leisure time, the acceptance of home responsibilities, and the attainment of economic efficiency.

The objectives of special education programs for the trainable mentally retarded children should provide maximum stimulation and growth in the development of acceptable social attitudes and in acquiring work habits that will enable

¹ State Plan For Special Education (Austin: Texas Education Agency, Revised, 1957), p. 1.

them to make their contributions in the home and community. The teacher will need to work constantly in helping these children to acquire adequate communicative skills and in finding ways of expressing themselves through speech, art, music, games, creative play and handcrafts. Emphasis should be placed on the attainment of acceptable personal habits and adequate patterns of social conduct.²

C. Admissions Regulations and Placement Procedures

As a requirement for enrollment in a special class, the mental and physical condition of the pupil must be definitely shown on a case history form, stating that the child needs special assistance over and above the types of instruction available in the regular classroom.

"Children whose I.Q.'s are below 70 and above 50, and who can profit from special education facilities, will be regarded as educably mentally retarded."³

The following regulations shall apply to all pupils admitted to special education classes:

1. Children shall be between the ages of 6 and 17, inclusive.
2. Children admitted into special education classes with the exception of the class for educable mentally retarded, shall have the mental ability to achieve in the regular academic program of the public school.

² Ibid., pp. 2-3.

³ A Guide For Organizing and Providing Special Education For Exceptional Children, Bulletin 520 (November, 1951), Texas Education Agency, p. 5.

3. In cases of multiple handicaps, mental retardation takes precedence for the purpose of establishing eligibility for classification.
4. All children must meet the minimum admission requirements.⁴

Eligibility for placement in special education classes:

A placement committee shall be established for determining the eligibility of exceptional children for placement in special classes. Such a committee might be composed of the superintendent or principal, regular homeroom teacher, special education teacher, doctor, and psychologist or psychometrist. This committee, after study of the data available on each child, shall make recommendations concerning each child's admission to special education on a trial basis.

An individual psychological study shall be a part of the data available on each child admitted to all types of special education, except speech correction. The psychological study shall be done by a psychometrist or psychologist acceptable to the local school. This study shall contain information concerning intelligence, social maturity, educability, physical status, environmental background, personal and family history, and the individual's strengths and special abilities.⁵

Bulletin 520, previously cited, also states that:

Although careful individual testing by specially trained personnel is necessary for final selection of all doubtful cases, teachers who have training in mental testing should use

⁴ State Plan For Special Education, op. cit., p. 5.

⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

at least one test similar to the first five tests below, plus The Vineland Social Maturity Scale or some similar test for screening purposes, to determine apparent educability.

1. Pintner, General Ability Tests; Verbal Series and Non-Verbal Series, World Book Company, Dallas.
2. California Test of Mental Maturity; California Test Bureau, Los Angeles, California.
3. Otis, Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Tests; World Book Company, Dallas.
4. Manuel, Cooperative Inter-American Tests of General Ability; Educational Testing Bureau, Princeton, New Jersey.
5. Kuhlmann-Anderson, Intelligence Tests; Educational Test Bureau, Nashville, Tennessee.
6. The Vineland Social Maturity Scale; Educational Test Bureau, Nashville, Tennessee.

If the child has had school experience, he should be given achievement tests as well as tests of general mental ability. If there is the slightest doubt as to the mental status and educability of the child, he should have an individual test by a competent psychologist. If the local school does not have such a person, the psychologist in the education department of the nearest college is one possible source for assistance.⁶

Admission to special education classes shall be determined on the basis of the following information:

⁶

Bulletin 520, op. cit., p. 6.

Educable and Trainable Mentally Retarded

1. Report of physical examination.
2. Report on psychological study, including estimate of social and mental development, and a statement containing pupil's need of special education, and a prediction of the pupil's ability to profit from special education.
3. Chronological age and sex.
4. Statement from parents approving admission to special education unit.
5. Recommendation of placement committee.⁷

In addition, the trainable child should meet the following criteria to the satisfaction of the local placement committee:

1. Mental age between 3 and 5 (Approximate I.Q. score of between 35 and 50.)
2. Ambulatory.
3. Developed some consistency in controlling body functions and dress habits.
4. Be able to follow simple directions.
5. Indicated potentiality for social adjustment.
6. Indicated potentiality for speech development.
7. Have written statement from parents indicating willingness for cooperation and consent for placement.⁸

⁷ State Plan For Special Education, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

⁸ Ibid., p. 7.

D. Establishing Special Classroom Units For Mentally Retarded Children

"In order to justify the organization of a special education teacher unit, there should be a sufficient number of eligible exceptional children to demand a full-time teacher."⁹

A special education unit shall be continued as long as it meets the standards set for that particular type of unit. In order to justify this continuance, an application containing the following information should be sent to the Director of the Division of Special Education and Public Services prior to June 1.

1. Type of unit.
2. Number of pupils in unit.
3. Average daily attendance.
4. Minimum and maximum number of children served during each semester.¹⁰

The superintendent shall make application for new special education units to the Director of Special Education and Pupil Services prior to June 1. This application will indicate the type of unit or units desired and the number, sex and ages of children eligible for each. The application shall be accompanied by:

1. The plan which has been developed for organizing and administering special education or any supplement to the plan which has been made since last application.

⁹ Bulletin 520, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁰ State Plan For Special Education, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

2. A statement indicating that all pupils in Special Education are eligible for their particular placement.

Application for special education unit shall be reviewed jointly by a committee from the Divisions of Special Education, Pupil Services, and Finance. The Division of Special Education will visit schools applying for initial Special Education programs. Initial approval will be made by the committee and approval becomes final when the name of a properly certified teacher is listed on the school's official roster.

If a teacher is not available at the opening of school, but employed later, or if a teacher is replaced, the superintendent notifies the Divisions of Special Education, Pupil Services, and Finance.¹¹

Special Education units shall be organized on the following basis:

1. A unit for single type of handicap
2. A unit for a combination of handicaps
3. One-half unit for a single type of handicap
4. A cooperative unit for a single type of handicap
5. A cooperative unit for a combination of handicaps

A combination unit is possible when there is an insufficient number of children with one handicap to form a single type unit. Only two types of handicaps may be grouped in one unit. However, in the organization of classes for trainable mentally retarded children, a combination unit will not be approved.

¹¹ State Plan For Special Education, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

If the children present common problems which will blend into a group-teaching situation, the group may be taught as a unit. A combination unit may also be possible when a teacher divides her time between two different teachable groups.

A cooperative unit is possible whenever one or more schools join a nearby school to operate a special education unit. All the children may be taught in one group at one of the schools, or a teacher may work part time with each group in their respective schools.

A half unit is allowable in instances when it is impossible to utilize a combination or a cooperative unit.

The following formula shall be used as a basis for determining eligibility for each type of special education unit (single, combination, and/or cooperative):

Table I: Formula For Determining Classroom Load Of Teachers of Retarded Children

Type of Handicap	Min. no. children for $\frac{1}{2}$ unit teacher	for one teacher	for two teachers	No. Children for each unit above two teachers
Educable Mentally Retarded	4	8	14	14
Trainable Mentally Retarded	4	8	14	14 ¹²

E. Developing A Local Plan For The Education of Retarded Children

Suggested items to include:

1. Statement of Philosophy for Special Education. The Board of Education may want to consider adopting a statement of resolution of policy and philosophy relative to scope and direction of special education in the local system.
2. Means of surveying school system and community to determine current needs of children work of general planning committee and subcommittee. Readiness of home, community, and school in supporting special education program.
3. Screening procedures used in determining eligibility of children for placement in special classes.

Type of tests used:

Group
Individual
Psychometric evaluation on all pupils,
except for speech correction

4. Criteria for placement and policies of admission for each type of special unit applied for.
5. What arrangements have been made or will be made for the following:

Physical facilities (classroom, rooms, or building.)
Equipment.
Teaching aids and instructional supplies.
Transportation.
Over-all coordination of program.

6. What arrangements are or will be made for parent-teacher conference.

Method used in reporting to parent.

7. Organization of classes for each type of unit as to:

Chronological age groupings.
Objectives of class or units.
Plan for instruction or curriculum guides.
Plan for integration into regular program to avoid complete isolation.

8. Method of administration of program and responsibility of staff.

9. Program evaluation procedures.

Method of re-evaluating students at periodic intervals.

10. Facilities and agencies that are available for related services.¹³

F. Instructional and Curricular Considerations in Special Programs For Mentally Retarded Children

1. Suggestions for Equipping Rooms for the Educable Mentally Retarded:

Location: The classes for educable mentally retarded children should be located in a building with children of comparable chronological age. In selecting a building, it is desirable to choose one that will offer the greatest number of opportunities to participate in the activities of the school, to use the equipment and other facilities and to receive the services of the special teaching staff such as nurse, counselor, speech correctionist, shop, homemaking, art and physical education teachers, etc. It is desirable that the classes be in a centrally located school building convenient to children in all parts of the school district.

The Classroom: Should be designed to fit the educational needs of the particular children to be housed in the room. It is recommended that 60 sq. ft. of floor space per child be allowed. The physical features should be flexible enough for a variety of arrangements of furnishings. There needs to be room enough for:

1. Individual activity
2. Group activity
3. Art and craft projects
4. Working with simple tools
5. Practicing household arts
6. Personal grooming activities
7. Rest
8. Rhythmic Games
9. Use of audio-visual aids

Built-in features of the room will include:

1. Sink and counter. Hot and cold water and counter space to fit the size of the children in the room.
2. Bulleting board and chalk board space. 30 to 40 feet recommended.
3. Electrical outlets. At least one electrical outlet on each side of room for young children. Older children will require additional outlets for iron, stove, refrigerator and other house-keeping equipment should be a part of the room itself.
4. Toilets and lavatory for younger children. Older children may use facilities used by other school children.
5. Storage space. An abundance of storage space including open shelves, closed cupboards and bins for toys, books, puzzles, dishes, paper, etc.

The floor should be covered with non-skid material which is light in color and easy to clean.

Illumination should meet the standard of 30 foot-candles of light without glare.

Furniture. Every room should have enough flat topped desks and chairs scaled to the size of the child to accommodate each one in the room. There should also be a desk and chair for the teacher.

2. Suggestions for Equipping Rooms for Trainable Mentally Retarded:

Location: The classrooms or rooms for trainable retarded children may be located either in an elementary school building or in a house or building removed from the regular school. However, this building should be located near an elementary building and the program assigned to this building principal, who will assume the same administrative functions as for other classes in the building.

The Classroom should be designed to meet the need for five areas of growth:

1. Physical training
2. Economic usefulness under supervision in home or sheltered environment
3. Self care
4. Social adjustment
5. Language development

Sixty squares feet per child is recommended in addition to:

1. Space for storage cots, supplies and wraps, and
2. Room for large pieces of equipment such as workbench, record player, tables and filling cabinets.

Safety features should receive special attention. The equipment needs to have rounded corners and a fenced play area is of prime importance.

Built-in features will include:

1. Sink and counter. Running water, both hot and cold are necessities in order to properly develop the activities centering around economic usefulness and self care.
2. Toilets and Lavatory. Activities centering around grooming and self help in personal habits make it imperative that toilets and lavatory be a part of the unit itself.
3. Electrical Outlets. At least one on each side of the room is needed.
4. Storage Space including open shelves, closed cupboards and bins for toys, books, paper, clay, concrete articles, etc. is needed.

Use of room: Routine and consistency are two cardinal principles with these children. Therefore, the room cannot be shared by another group either during the day, after school or over the week-end. It is impossible for a teacher to develop a suitable training program when equipment and supplies are being used and disarranged by others.

The floor and illumination should be the same for that of educable mentally retarded.

The furniture. Each room will need enough chairs and tables, scaled to the size of the children enrolled.¹⁴

3. Grouping

In setting up programs for mentally retarded children it has been suggested that children be grouped into special units according to the four factors below:

a. Chronological age. A chronological age range of not more than four years is recommended, and it should be possible to work out such an arrangement in most school situations. City school systems large enough to support a number of classes might think in terms of providing three age groups, a primary group for children under 10 years of age, an intermediate group for children 10 through 12 years old, and an advanced group for children above 13 years of age.

b. Physical maturity. Mentally retarded boys and girls do not differ widely from normal children in physical development. It seems evident then, that classes for mentally retarded children are less conspicuous if they are located: the primary group near grades 1-3, the intermediate group near grades 4-6, and the advanced group near the junior and senior high school grades.

c. Social maturity. Given opportunity for comparable experiences, the social interests and activities of mentally retarded children will closely resemble those of other children their age. Their self-confidence, ability to get along with others, general social maturity and emotional stability are greatly strengthened when they can associate with other children of approximately the same age. This is the most important reason for including these pupils in regular school activities, such as play and lunches, which do not depend on academic proficiency for success. For this reason also, it is advantageous for older groups to be housed in high school buildings. The oversize boy or girl can feel more self-respect on entering the high school building than would be felt on entering an elementary building where younger children attend school. Moreover, there are many high school activities in which these boys and girls can take a part.

d. Mental maturity. Where children are selected for special class placement and are drawn from such a narrow I.Q. range as 50-70 it tends to restrict the range of mental ages

within the class group. Yet there are times when the abilities of one or two children may be so much out of line with the rest of the class that their potentialities can be better realized if they are transferred to another class.

It is particularly important for the classroom teacher to know the current mental age of her children. She must plan much of her academic work with a view of reaching each child at his own level. Unless this information is in her possession she is not in a position to plan adequately for the pupils in her group.

Mentally retarded children should share whatever privileges in the form of recesses, assemblies, special work in art, music, shop, library, physical education, excursions, and use of visual aids that are permitted the other children. When participating in such activities, the children should be in their own age groups.¹⁵

4. Public School Curriculum Differentiation For Retarded Children

It is believe that mentally retarded children need a curriculum adapted to their mental age, their approximate developmental rate and their social maturity. The philosophy should be to teach the child subject matter and skills rather than to teach subject matter and skills to the child. There are certain facts which form the basis for planning school programs with these children, whatever the age of the group. Among the first of these is a thorough knowledge of the child's abilities in the light of his chronological age. The following table will serve to

15

Bulletin 520, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

to assist in such planning:

Table II: Chronological Age Ranges For The Grouping of Retarded Children

	Chronological Age Range in Years	Mental Age Range in Years	Grade Ability
Pre-Primary	6-8	3-5	Pre-Kdg.
Primary	9-11	5-7	Kdg.-2
Intermediate	12-14	6-9	2-4
Junior High (Prevocational Classes)	15-16	8-11	3-5
Senior High (Prevocational Classes)	17-20	9-12	4-6

When the children have a mental age below 6 years, regardless of their chronological age, that part of the curriculum dealing with reading, writing and arithmetic should be wholly omitted. The emphasis should then be placed upon pre-reading experiences such as motor and sensory training, personal hygiene and habit training, improvement of speech, emotional control, rhythm, drawing and other simple activities at school and in the home.

To teach mentally retarded children to live in a social environment the following types of experiences can be used:

1. Such habit training as emphasis upon personal cleanliness and neatness, proper toilet habits, care of such personal property as paste, coat and rubbers, and safety.

2. Such social experiences as talking about relationships involving father, mother, baby, sister, brother, schoolmates, school officers, policemen, firemen, visiting nurse and street cleaner.

3. Such sense training as recognition of name when called; matching shapes, colors, sizes, and positions of objects; picture-completion puzzles; watching natural phenomena such as sky, clouds, trees and sunlight; recognition of objects by sound, smell, touch; recognition of food elements by taste; and recognition of primary colors.

4. Such speech training as emphasis upon clear enunciation and correction of baby talk, broken English, lisping, stammering and other speech defects..

5. Such muscular coordination as rhythm exercises, such as marching, dancing and outdoor games; the use of large muscles to the accompaniment of musical instrument or singing; exercises, such as walking a balanced rail, stepping through the rungs of a slightly elevated horizontal ladder and walking over a stile of three or four steps.

6. Such nature study as getting acquainted with common pets, flowers, trees and seasonal weather changes.

7. Such training as hammering nails into a block of wood; carrying household articles as needed; stringing spools, beads and buttons; coarse needlework on materials that carry a pattern with a pair of scissors; carrying blocks; pieces of wood or stone, sand or gravel, from one place to another, or gathering them into a pile in the center of the room or yard.

All of these activities, and experiences of a similar type, can be used as the foundation for training in oral language. They can be made more effective if they are integrated into a purposeful program of work, planned about a center of interest and forming a teaching unit.

As the child grows older chronologically, some improvements in performing muscular and manual activity may be expected. Practice will improve physical coordination and develop ability to perform useful tasks. Boys can learn to handle a shovel, hoe and wheelbarrow to help in digging gardens or in clearing land of stones. Girls can assist in household duties. The objective of the whole program is to make the individual, however low his intelligence may be, happier and more comfortable as well as useful by helping him to contribute something to the life of which he is a part.¹⁶

G. Qualifications For Teachers of Mentally Retarded Children In The Public Schools of Texas

Teachers of retarded children should have completed an approved baccalaureate degree program which, in addition to featuring specialization, has provided a core of liberalizing experiences predicated upon the common backgrounds and foundations of our social and cultural heritage.

Futhermore, the following are required:

1. Completion of around 27 semester hours in the content courses required for teachers in elementary schools

2. 12 semester hours in elementary education
3. 6 semester hours of preparation directly related to the total program of special education; such as, Survey Course, Tests and Measurements, and Speech Correction
4. 6 semester hours of work directly related to teaching retarded children
5. 6 semester hours in directed teaching which should include actual practice teaching with physically handicapped children or acceptable practice teaching in the elementary grades.¹⁷

In the State of Texas, teachers may merit either "provisional" or "professional" certification, which are differentiated as follows:

1. General Requirements For Provisional Certificate

Hold a bachelor's degree from and be recommended by an institution of higher learning approved for teacher education by the State Board of Education.

Have completed one or more of the approved programs in the following areas of specialization:

Elementary, grades 1-8 (including kindergartens and grades 9 of junior high schools)
 Junior high, grades 6-10
 Secondary, grades 7-12
 Special subjects, all grades
 Art
 Health and physical education
 Music
 Speech-Drama
 Special Education

Be of good moral character.

Be a citizen or in the process of becoming a naturalized citizen, of the United States.

Believe in and uphold the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Texas.

Have completed in a Texas institution of higher learning a course or courses in which the Constitutions of the United States and of the State of Texas have been given special emphasis.

Have completed at least six semester hours in American History, or three semester hours of Texas History.

2. General Requirements for Professional Certificate

Have completed an approved program of at least 30 semester hours of graduate work beyond the bachelor's degree requirements at an institution of higher learning approved for graduate teacher education by the State Board of Education.

Have at least three years of teaching experience. (A year of teaching experience is defined as each scholastic year of employment as a certified teacher in public schools within any of the forty-eight states of the United States of America, or within the boundaries of any of its territorial possessions.....)

Have completed one or more of the approved graduate programs in the areas of specialization mentioned above.

.....

The professional or provisional certificate is valid for life unless cancelled by lawful authority and gives the holder legal authority to perform duties in the public schools of Texas in the specialized areas designated on the face of the certificate.¹⁸

H. Data Needed for Audit Purposes

The following data should be included in the:

Superintendent's Administrative Special Education Folder

1. Copy of the local plan for organization and administering the total program.
2. Copy of the approved application.
3. Certificates for all special education teachers.
4. The teacher's daily schedule.
5. Calendar and schedule for all special education teachers on ten months approval.
6. List showing name, sex, age, disability, and date of enrollment on each child used as basis for justifying all units.

Pupils Individual Cumulative Record Folder

(For Mentally Retarded)

1. Name, sex, and chronological age.
2. Report of general medical examination (physical.)
3. Written report of complete psychological work-up by a competent psychologist. This work-up to include: an estimate of social age, and strengths and weakness; also the need for, and prognosis of, ability to profit from the special class.
4. A signed statement from parent approving admission.
5. A signed report and recommendation from the placement committee.

Special Education Teacher's Attendance Records should Reveal that:

1. Orthopedic homebound and/or hospital units are receiving a minimum of 3 hours instruction per week.
2. Self-contained classes for the orthopedic, visual, deaf/severely hard-of-hearing, mentally retarded, are the same as those kept in the regular classroom.

Formula For Use In Allocation of Minimum Foundation
Funds For Special Education Units

The Audit Division will use the number of eligible pupils enrolled on the first Monday in October of current school year, as the basis for determining the eligibility for a full unit or half unit. Any unit adjustment necessary as a result of the audit report, will be made by the Division of Finance in their final allocation of Minimum Foundation Funds.¹⁹

¹⁹ Data Needed for Audit Purposes, Texas Education Agency (Unnumber mimeograph State, Division of Special Education).

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS: IDENTIFICATION, DIAGNOSIS ASSIGNMENT AND ADJUSTMENT OF CANDIDATES FOR SPECIAL CLASSES

A. The Sampling

In the Spring of 1959, questionnaires (Form II, previously mentioned) were mailed to some forty-two (42) teachers of mentally retarded children employed in the areas of the State of Texas identified in the foregoing pages. Of this total, twenty-three (23) or 59.8% of these instruments were returned.

The data treated in this and in the following chapters were gathered from the responses of the twenty three (23) teachers who returned Form II and from visitations in the schools in question.

Overall, 21 schools are represented in this sampling; among them are the George W. Carver Elementary and Junior High School Unit for mentally retarded children in the Aldine School District (Houston), Texas; The West Oakland Special Education Unit in Beaumont, Texas; The Booker T. Washington Special Education Unit and George W. Carver Special Education Unit in Galveston, Texas; The Douglas

Elementary School Special Unit, Miller Junior High Special Unit, R. G. Lockett Junior High Special Unit, and Bruce Elementary School Special Unit in Houston, Texas; the Lake Wood Elementary School Special Unit in La Marque, Texas; The Wallace Elementary School Special Unit in Orange, Texas; The Lincoln Special Education Unit in Port Arthur, Texas; and the Texas City Special Education Unit in Texas City, Texas.¹

B. Identification of Mentally Retarded Children

During the course of this study it was found that with regard to the selection of candidates for special classes, it is the responsibility of the school to discover children who are mentally retarded. It is relatively easy to discover these candidates after they have been admitted to school, but it is somewhat more difficult to find these candidates in the community before they have come to the attention of school authorities.

Informal conversational contacts with teachers of special classes in the communities visited and an analysis

¹
The identification on the questionnaires of the schools whose programs were being studied was optional; hence, the exclusion in the above listing of the names of the remaining 8 schools in the sample each of which is located in Houston, Texas.

of information provided by teachers in responding to Form II have revealed that in 18 of the 21 schools involved in this study, or in 84.6% of the school cases, achievement and general intelligence tests were used in conjunction with informal observation and referrals to identify the mentally retarded. An I. Q. rating of 70 or below on a standard intelligence test was the usual test criterion employed in identifying the mentally retarded.

Many personnel are involved in the referral of candidates for special classes. A study of responses to relevant questionnaire items has revealed that in 14 of the 21 schools involved in this study, or in 65.8% of the school cases, the services of persons affiliated with medical and/or psychological clinics were used by the schools to identify the mentally retarded. In the remaining 34.2% of the cases, local parent organizations, the school nurse, superintendent, and supervisor were mentioned as sources which frequently aid in the identification of such children.

Certain physical and/or behavioral characteristics were found to aid in identifying mentally retarded children. Prominent among the characteristics that were noticeable in the classrooms visited were mongolism (slant eyes, large tongue, etc.), microcephalism (small head), hydrocephalism (large head), dwarfism, lack of bodily coordination, and

convulsive seizures.

In addition to these physical characteristics it was reported that gross educational retardation was another tendency which aided in the identification of these children.

It is also interesting to note that in several cases, certain children in the special classes were not found to be subnormal with regard to their mental potential, but had nevertheless been placed with the mentally retarded because of extremely low achievement resulting from marked poor vision, defective hearing, or convulsive seizures.

C. Diagnosis of Mentally Retarded Children

An adequate diagnosis of an exceptional child for the purpose of determining his abilities, disabilities, and needs requires, according to those who responded to the instruments devised for this investigation, a study of the whole child. The usual procedure is to begin by having a child who is suspected of having low intelligence diagnosed through the administration of a standardized intelligence test. It was found that in 15 of the 21 schools involved in this study, or in 70.5% of the cases, the Revised Stanford-Binet instrument (Form L)² was used in the diagnostic procedure. In

²
Revised Stanford-Binet Scale by Lewis M. Terman and Maude A. Merrill. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2 Park Street, Boston 7, Mass., 1937. Ages 2 and over. In 1937, a revision of the Stanford-Binet Scale published 1916; Two Forms L and M. Individual Test.

the remaining 39.5% of the cases other tests were used for diagnostic purposes. Among those mentioned were the following: Otis Quick Scoring Mental Ability Test;³ California Tests of Mental Maturity,⁴ and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children.⁵

In several cases in addition to general intelligence tests, achievements tests--notably the Metropolitan Series--⁶ were also employed as diagnostic tools.

A complete medical examination, for the purpose of determining possible etiology and establishing the need for

³
Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Tests by A.S. Otis. World Book Company, 313 Park Hill Avenue, Yonkers, N. Y., 1939. The tests are composed of three batteries for grades 1.5-4, 4-9, and 9-16. The tests at the lowest level may be given either nonverbally or verbally.

⁴
California Tests of Mentally Maturity by E. T. Sullivan, W.W. Clark and E. W. Tiegs. California Test Bureau, 5916 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles 28, California, 1951. These tests of intelligence are primarily power tests with ample time limits. They consist of five batteries with a range of mental ability from Kindergarten through college (Kgn.-1, 1-3, 4-8, 7-10 and adults, 9-16 and adults).

⁵
Wechsler-Bellevue Intelligence Scale for Children by David Wechsler. Psychological corporation Company, 509-513 North East Street, Bloomington, Illinois, 1949. Ages 10-70. Verbal and performance scores. Two forms. Individual test.

⁶
Metropolitan Achievement Tests by R. D. Allen, et al. World Book Company, 313 Park Hill Avenue, Yonkers, N. Y., 1940. Separate batteries of these tests may be obtained for grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5-6, 7-8.5. 5 levels: Form R and S.

medical treatment was found to be a second procedure in the diagnosis of suspected candidates for special classes. As a result of the findings of such medical examinations teachers were able to report that some 60% of the cases of mental retardation with which they worked were caused by brain damage of one kind or another.

The investigation also pointed up the tendency to study social, personality, neighborhood and family conditions on the part of handicapped children as important aspects of adequate diagnosis. And while these efforts are usually of an informal nature (except in the case of children who are referred to psychological specialists) they are believed by teachers to play an important role in the establishment of functional programs designed to facilitate the all-round adjustment of the retarded child.

Before a final decision to enroll (or not to enroll) a child in a special class for mentally retarded individuals is made, it was found that the usual procedure is to study carefully the results obtained from each phase of the diagnosis, interrelate them, and then effect a comprehensive evaluation of the particular case in point.

D. Assignment to Special Classes

Admission to a special education class was found to be

effected through the recommendation of a placement committee. It was found that in 19 of the 21 schools involved in this study, or in 89.3% of the cases, a Placement Committee was used in the assignment of candidates to special classes.

It was further revealed that with regard to the composition of these Placement Committees, the types and number of constituent members varied with the school district. Persons most frequently named, however, when teachers responded to Form I, Item 2, included the Coordinator or Director of Special Education; Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent; Principal; Special Education Teacher; the concerned teacher who made the referral; and Psychologist. It was also noted that in most instances, not more than five members were used on the Placement Committee when assigning candidates for special classes.

For those cases where a special Placement Committee is not used, the final decision is made by the Supervisor or Coordinator in question, following an analysis of referrals, diagnostic results and possible contact with the prospective candidate.

Despite the decision on the part of school personnel to enter a given mentally retarded child in a special class, it was found that in all cases before he is actually enrolled

his parent or guardian must sign a written statement approving the child's admission to the class. In 21 of the 21 schools involved in this investigation, or in 100% of the cases, the necessary parental consent had been secured for those students who were enrolled in the special classes.

E. Adjustment of Mentally Retarded Children

Regarding the adjustment of children enrolled in special classes, as seen through the eyes of their teachers, this study has revealed that in 11 of the 21 schools, or in 51.7% of the cases, the children "definitely seem to enjoy and look forward to their classroom experiences." Other reactions noted in the study, such as regular attendance of the children daily, parental visitations, the organization of school community groups in the interest of exceptional children, and the moral support, interest, and cooperation of school personnel functioning in the regular school program, all serve to validate the finding that the adjustment and progress of many of the children enrolled in the special classes has, on the whole, been gratifying.

In some 17 of the 21 schools, or in 79.9% of the cases, teachers felt that a moderate adjustment had been

made by those enrolled in the special classes. No appreciable progress was reported in only 4 of the schools responding.

As far as the participation of retarded children in the regular school activities is concerned, it was discovered that in 16 of the 21 schools involved in this study, or in 75.2% of the cases, membership in certain clubs, attendance at special assemblies, and cafeteria services were open to these handicapped youngsters, many of whom responded well to this opportunity.

It should also be noted here that most of the handicapped children, their parents and teachers were positively oriented toward the Special Education Programs, once they had become actively involved with them. This study has also found that before parents and guardians learn about the real nature and objectives of special facilities for exceptional children, considerable resentment is expressed. Many of the handicapped children themselves also display a reluctance to enter the special class and relate well to the opportunities provided therein. In several cases, it was reported that efforts stretched out over a two year period were required to "sell" the Special Education Program to parents who were not acquainted with the program, before they consented to avail themselves of these services.

It was found, too, that students in the regular school program were not always as "accepting" toward their handicapped schoolmates as could or should have been the case. Even after certain of the mentally retarded children had been enrolled in special classes, their parents continued to express misgivings, wondering, "When is my child going to be released from this Special Class?"

Such reactions and their implications are discussed more fully in Chapter VI of the manuscript at hand.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS: THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES FOR MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN

In the present chapter, study findings relating to the special instructional provisions furnished for mentally retarded children in "sheltered" classroom units are presented. As in the previous chapter, in the present one an analytical narrative is used to point up the reactions obtained during interviews and the results of the questionnaire phase of the investigation.

A. Instructional Objectives

The educable mentally retarded child whose I.Q. falls in the range from 50 to 70 was found to be eligible for Special Education classes in the public school districts of the State of Texas identified in the foregoing pages. It is interesting to note that the educational objectives for this group of youngsters are not substantially different from the educational objectives which give direction to the "regular" school program. It was found that in each of the Special Education classes investigated, a philosophy or a set of objectives relative to the Special Education Programs

for the mentally retarded was evident, in one way or another.

The most frequently-named objectives which instructional programs were designed to meet according to teachers' responses to Form II, Item B-1, included: (1) Language development, highlighted as an objective in 21 of 23 special classes or in 90.3% of the classroom cases; (2) Self-care mentioned in 18 instances or in 77.5% of the classroom cases; (3) Social adjustment mentioned in 21 instances or in 90.3% of the classroom instances; (4) Physical training mentioned in 15 instances or in 64.5%; and (5) Occupational usefulness mentioned in 17 instances or in 73.1% of the classroom cases.

It was felt by the special class teachers that these objectives should be in compliance with the problems and challenges with which the mentally retarded child will probably come in contact in real life situations. These problems and activities will be discussed later in this chapter.

B. Instructional Activities

The instructional programs for mentally retarded children operating in the schools used in this study were thought to be (by the teachers contacted) rather realistically geared to meet the needs, interests, and problems of the individuals enrolled in the special classes. Noteworthy

is the fact that a study of relevant responses to the teachers' questionnaire, (Form II) has revealed that in most of the schools involved in this study, in 20 out of 21 or in 97.4% of the school cases, classroom learning experiences centered around: Creative art work, musical activities, play and recreation, periods for rest and relaxation, the development of language skills, number work, social refinement, personal hygiene, usefulness to the group and character development. Other responses indicated that rudimentary occupational guidance, occasional fire drills, and the assimilation of good spiritual and moral values were used from time to time.

In the actual development of the curriculum, it was found that these classroom learning activities are assigned a given period of time in the daily schedule. In other words, the daily instructional schedule is divided among academic activities; arts and crafts; music; physical exercises; periods of rest and allotted periods for the development of good social traits and occupational usefulness.

While these periods are rather definitely fixed in most cases, some teachers stated the desirability of a flexible approach to classroom activities in the interest of giving "the unforeseen" proper consideration.

For the four high schools contacted, in addition to

the learning activities provided in the special classes, the older retarded students participated in many of the regular school classes, particularly those with an occupational orientation. Prominent among these classes were those in woodwork or "shop," cooking and baking, sewing, cosmetology, and home nursing. It is also stimulating to note that some of the mentally retarded students made outstanding contributions to these classes in the form of their execution of individual projects. According to the teachers functioning in these programs, vocational training of this nature affords the young person (despite his handicap) many opportunities and experiences in dealing with occupational tasks which may possibly contribute to his future security.

In the planning of instructional experiences for mentally retarded children, it was found that an attempt was made to utilize concrete classroom activities which are vital to life and meaningful; that is, experiences which are centered around natural interests, aspirations and problems which are intimately enmeshed in the fabric of day-to-day living.

Regarding the extent to which the instructional unit is used in the special classes, the present investigation has revealed that in 10 of 21 schools or in 47% of the

cases, the teachers "did employ the teaching-learning unit as an instructional aid." In 14 of the 21 schools or in 60.2% of the cases "lesson plans were prepared and used" with or without the unit approach.

Listed below are representative instructional units which have been used in the public school classes for mentally retarded children as described by some of the teachers contacted in this study:

(1) "The Home and Family Unit"-Training in home and family life provided through cultivation of habits of neatness, responsibility, working cooperatively with members of the family and class.

(2) "Personal Hygiene or Health Unit"-Habits of healthful living developed through a knowledge of how to take care of one's self and how and where to obtain medical care.

(3) "Community Resources and Helpers Unit"-Things, places, and people in the community and the work of each.

(4) "Self Care Unit"-Developing the skills of dressing and undressing, good grooming, eating and the use of the toilet.

(5) "Safety Unit"-Recognizing dangerous objects, use of household appliances, traffic rules, etc.

(6) "Economic Usefulness in the Home Unit"-

To perform simple work habits (making bed, caring for pets and plants, running errands, cleaning, and caring for yards).

(7) "Practical Units on the 3 R's"-Concretely

planned according to the pupils' level of achievement in reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling.

Through such units, important life skills and attitudes are integrated with art, music, physical skills, and other phases of a wholesome human experience.

It was also found that visual aids of many types, numerous concrete activities, practical "non-involved" considerations, and relatively short periods of daily work were stressed by all the teachers who contributed to this investigation.

C. Physical Facilities and Other Teaching Aids

According to the findings of the study, the special classes are housed in several ways in the schools contacted. In 10 of the 21 schools, or in 47% of the case, a regular classroom was used as a meeting place for retarded students. In 8 of the 21 schools, or in 37.6% of the cases, specially designed separate units away from the main school building or units occupying the entire first floor of the regular building

were used. And in the remaining 3 schools, or in 15.4% of the cases, temporary improvised areas such as a portion of an assembly hall or the cafeteria were used.

Among the items of special supplies and equipment used in the classroom units for mentally retarded children were the following: Standup tables, desk tables, posture chairs, cot and/or cots, desk (teacher), chair (teacher), sand table, telephone, radio, maps, art and craft materials, library books, chart table, flannel board, view-master and films, toilets and lavatory, storage space, clock and clock faces, racks for books, and charts, bulletin and chalkboards, file that can be locked (teacher), record player with speed regulator, film strip machine with films, blocks (all sizes and shapes), sink and counter (hot and cold water), educational games, science equipment, portfolio of pictures, pocket chart, standard typewriter, globe, and toys. These instructional aids are usually furnished fairly readily by the school district in question upon receipt of a properly executed requisition form.

The classroom units visited during the course of this investigation were for the most part found to be neat, well lighted, attractively decorated, and kept up by the students in the interest of promoting the development of occupational usefulness and an appreciation for order and cleanliness.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS: THE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS OF SPECIAL CLASSES AND SELECTED ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAMS INVESTIGATED

A. Personality Characteristics and the Professional Preparation of Teachers of Mentally Retarded Children

It is important to the individual who is considering teaching the mentally retarded child as a career to understand what is required of him--and to know whether he possess the interests and competencies basic to success in this chosen field of work.

During the course of this study, it was observed that it is generally assumed by the teachers who contributed information that personal qualifications are much the same for all teachers regardless of the particular area of special education in question. The characteristics which were most frequently applied to teachers of mentally retarded children however included: (a) a genuine like for teaching and an abiding interest in children; (b) show evidence of satisfactory physical health and emotional stability; (c) be professionally secure, have self respect and courage; (d) be conservative in dress and personal appearance; (e) be

patient and persistence; (f) seek to avoid selfish or self-centered patterns of response; (g) have skills in planning and organizing instructional projects and related activities; and (h) display an eager and enthusiastic willingness to work with the mentally retarded child.

In terms of professional preparation, it was found in this study that most school districts require that a prospective teacher of the mentally retarded should have certification in Special Education endorsed by the Texas Education Agency,¹ or should be in the process of completing same. It was felt by those participating in this study, that their learning experiences were centered around or should be based upon information concerning the physical, psychological and educational characteristics of the mentally retarded; the principles involved in developing a curriculum for a classroom group as a whole as well as for specific segments of the whole; methods of teaching; the philosophy underlying the organization of a program; and if possible, supervised practice or laboratory experiences with mentally retarded children.

According to teachers' responses to Form II, Item C-6,

¹ The three components of the Texas Education Agency are the State Board of Education, the State Commissioner of Education, and the State Department of Education.

it was found that 13 of the 23 teachers who participated in this study or 55.9% of the special teachers, held provisional or professional certification² qualifying them to instruct the mentally retarded. The remaining 10 teachers or 44.1% of the total, were holders of temporary permits³ who were advancing toward certification in the field of Special Education in order that they might move into special classes for a more permanent basis.

It is interesting to note that some teachers working in the schools in southeastern Texas which were contacted during the study were certified in other areas of Special Education other than that relating to mentally retarded children. A study of relevant responses to Form II, Item C-9, has revealed that certain teachers were certified in the areas of: the acoustically handicapped, visually handicapped, orthopedically-cardiopathic handicapped and speech handicapped.

According to responses to the questionnaire mailed to teachers of the mentally handicapped, this study has

² Differentiated in Chapter II.

³ In certain districts where needs are acute, teachers who have not yet completed all of their preparation for certification in the field of Special Education are issued "special (temporary) permits."

also revealed that the sequence of preparation in this area of Special Education in Texas consisted of the following types of courses: (a) survey courses in the education of exceptional children; (b) general courses in the adjustment of teaching for exceptional children; (c) basic courses in speech correction; (d) methods and materials for teaching mentally retarded children; (e) remedial and diagnostic treatment of school subjects; (f) curriculum building for the mentally retarded; (g) human development and child psychology; and (h) educational measurements.

In addition to these various course requirements for teachers of the mentally retarded, it was found that almost every teacher of the mentally retarded was educated in elementary education with the knowledge required to teach the content subjects of elementary schools.

It should be noted that the teachers who were instructing classes for mentally retarded children in the schools investigated in this study all held at least a Bachelor's degree. Thirteen of these teachers or 69.9%, held the Master of Education or Master of Science degree, while the remaining 10 or 44.1% held a Bachelor's degree and were currently enrolled in colleges and universities working toward certification and in some cases, a Master's degree.

Some of the institutions which had been attended (or were being attended) by persons in the interest of certification in Special Education were: University of Denver, Denver, Colorado; San Francisco State College, San Francisco, California; University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan; Syracuse University, Syracuse New York; Utah University Extension; Texas Southern University, Houston, Texas; University of Texas, Austin, Texas; and Prairie View A. and M. College, Prairie View, Texas.

B. Selected Administrative Aspects of the Program Investigated

It is of primary importance in good principal and staff relationship that every one employed by the school shall know from the beginning why a special education program is needed and what may be accomplished by it. Knowing these things, principal and staff members can appreciate the value and worth of planning the steps to be taken and the contributions they can make individually and collectively to the achievement of the special education program's defined objectives. It was felt by teachers contacted that unless care is taken to establish clearly the underlying reasons for the program and the benefit that may be expected from it, the chances are better than ever that some indivi-

duals will look at the entire undertaking with deep suspicion and question the motives of those in leadership. Regarding this aspect of the special education programs in the schools of southeeastern Texas that were contacted in this investigation, it was found that in 17 of 21 schools, or in 81.7% of them "the educational program for mentally retarded children had been well received by the principal and the school staff."

The Special Education teachers themselves can look forward, it was revealed in these school districts, to guidance and leadership from a District Supervisor or Coordinator for Special Education. In some cases it was reported by teachers contacted that such assistance came from Elementary Education Supervisors, Superintendents, or Principals, however, whatever the case might be, supervision was offered at the district level for the purposes of discussing arising problems, developing or revising the curriculum, and conducting other necessary business.

According to the responses to Form II, Item C-3, it was found that each of the 23 teachers who participated in this study, or 100% of the teachers, acquired needed instructional supplies and equipment by requisitioning them through the usual administrative channels--although in a few isolated instances it was reported that personal funds

were utilized in purchasing certain inexpensive classroom or instructional items. The funds provided for the purchasing of materials and supplies and equipment for the special units came from both state and local sources.

It is interesting to note that some teachers working in the school districts which were contacted during the study were members of active community councils or associations for exceptional children. Responses to Form II, Item C-5, indicate that 19 of the 23 teachers, or 81.7% of them were active members in local associations for exceptional children. This investigation has also revealed that 13 of the 23 teachers, or 55.9% of them participate in professional meetings with colleagues in the field of Special Education on the average of once a month.

National, regional, or local agencies which have expressed an interest in and which have supported the Special Education programs in question--in one way or another--included: (a) the Houston Federation For The Handicapped; (b) the Mental Health Society (Houston); (c) the Galveston County Crippled Children's Society; (d) the Galveston County Council For Retarded Children; (e) Future Nurses Aid; (f) Texas Association For Retarded Children; (g) National Association For Retarded Children and (h) The American Association on Mental Deficiency.

It has also been revealed that the teachers of the mentally retarded who participated in this study "have access to and read relatively regularly" professional periodicals in the field of special education. This list of professional periodicals included: (a) The Backward Child; (b) Sight Saving Review; (c) Children Limited; (d) Cerebral Palsy Review; (e) The Cripple Child; (f) Mental Hygiene; (g) Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders; (h) Journal of Mental Deficiency; and (i) Exceptional Children.

Regarding the salaries of teachers of mentally retarded children participating in this investigation it was found that 10 of the 23 teachers, or 43% of them, felt that they were "not adequately paid as a teacher in the area of Special Education." Nine teachers, or 38.7% of the total sample felt that they "were adequately paid as a teacher in the area of Special Education." No response was reported in the case of 4 of the 23 teachers.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

A. Summary of Principal Findings

This study was designed to investigate representative special classes, or units, with educational provisions for mentally retarded children in eight public school districts in southeastern Texas. The findings are based on: (1) an analysis of responses to a questionnaire distributed to teachers of mentally retarded children in the school programs selected for study; (2) visitations in several of the classroom units for mentally retarded children.

The purpose of the study was fivefold:

(1) To determine the extent to which Special Education Provisions for mentally retarded children are found in the districts and to determine the procedures used to identify mentally retarded children.

(2) To examine the types of physical facilities, curricula materials, administrative arrangements and instructional techniques utilized.

(3) To note the characteristics of the teachers who have assumed the responsibility of working with mentally

retarded children.

(4) To determine the adequacy of educational provisions for this exceptional group of youngsters.

(5) To compare the extent to which the programs investigated parallel the standards endorsed by the Texas State Department of Education.

Major findings of the study can be stated briefly as follows:

1. Special Education Provisions for mentally retarded children were found to exist in each of the school districts involved in the investigation.

2. It was found that with regard to the selection of candidates for special classes, it is the responsibility of the school to discover children who are mentally retarded. Achievement and individual intelligence tests were used in conjunction with informal observation and referrals to identify the mentally retarded.

The Revised Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test (Form L) was the diagnostic tool of this kind most widely used in the identification of mentally retarded children.

3. Another procedure in the diagnosis of suspected candidates for special classes is a complete medical examination for the purpose of determining possible etiology.

For example, it was found that the highest percentage of cases of mentally retardation involved in this study was caused by brain damage of one kind or another.

4. Many personnel are involved in the referral of candidates for special classes. The services of persons affiliated with medical and/or psychological clinics were used frequently by schools as an aid in the identification of the mentally retarded.

5. Actual admission to a special class was found to be effected through the recommendation of a Placement Committee, usually composed of at least the Teacher(s) of mentally retarded children, the District Supervisor for Special Education, the referring party, the District Superintendent or his representative and examining physician and/or psychologist. In all cases, the necessary parental consent had been secured for those students who were enrolled in the special class.

6. The most frequently named objectives which instructional programs were designed to meet included: Language development, self-care, social adjustment, physical training and occupational usefulness.

In most of the schools involved in this study the classroom learning experiences centered around: Creative art work, musical activities, play and recreation, periods

for rest and relaxation, the development of language skills, number work, social refinement, personal hygiene, usefullness to the group, character development, rudimentary occupational guidance, occassional fire drills, and the assimilation of good spiritual and moral values.

In the high schools contacted in addition to the learning activities provided in the special classes, the older retarded students often participated in several of the regular school classes, particularly those with an occupational orientation.

The special classes are housed in several ways in the schools contacted. Regular classrooms are used; separate units away from the main school building are sometimes used; and in new programs, improvised areas such as a portion of the assembly hall are not infrequently used temporarily.

7. A majority of the teachers employed the teaching learning unit as an instructional aid in the special classes. Lesson plans were prepared and used with or without the unit approach, however.

8. The teachers who contributed information assumed that personal qualifications should be much the same for all teachers regardless of particular area of special education.

In terms of professional preparation, it was found that most of the school districts required that a prospective teacher of the mentally retarded should have certification in Special Education endorsed by the Texas Education Agency.

Certain teachers were certified in the areas of the acoustically, visually, orthopedically-cardiopatic and speech handicapped, in addition to that of the mentally retarded. Teachers who were instructing classes for mentally retarded children all held at least a Bachelor's degree and several were currently enrolled in various colleges and universities working toward more permanent certification and in some cases, a master's degree.

9. It was felt that the educational program for mentally retarded children had been rather well received by the principal and the school staff. In the school districts the teachers could look forward to guidance and leadership from a district supervisor or coordinator of Special Education. Funds required for the purchasing of materials, supplies and equipment for the special units came from both state and local sources.

10. Most of the teachers of retarded children working in the school districts which were contacted during the investigation were members of active community councils

or associations for exceptional children. Certain related national, regional, and local agencies had expressed an interest in and were supporting the special programs which were explored.

11. Teachers of the mentally retarded who participated in this study had access to and read relatively regularly various professional periodicals in the field of special education.

12. Overall, teachers felt that a fair adjustment and moderate developmental progress had been achieved by a majority of the mentally retarded children enrolled in the special classes.

B. General Evaluative Statement Relative to the Programs Investigated

During the course of this study, the various standards or guiding principles for the establishment and operation of special public school programs for mentally retarded children which have been formulated by the Texas Education Agency, were employed "informally" as evaluative criteria. And while the writer has made no attempt to evaluate formally the special educational facilities which furnished the base for the study of which this manuscript treats, it would seem to be in order to mention (in at

least a general way) something about the extent to which the local district programs explored do or do not seem to parallel standards established by the state educational agency.

When the findings stated above are projected against the standards and principles considered in Chapter II, it becomes relatively clear that the special programs for mentally retarded children which were studied during the course of the investigation reported upon here, do parallel the guide posts set up by the Texas Education Agency for such provisions.

This is not to suggest that the facilities studied are in any way perfect or nearing perfection. Most of the programs which were examined are relatively "youthful" in character and there are various aspects of them which need to be improved upon. Still, it is possible to state that with regard to their general orientation organizationally and administratively they are following to a considerable extent the direction set by the state educational agency.

By way of illustration, the following guiding principles and/or practices formulated by the Texas Education Agency for use in Special Education programs for mentally retarded children are reflected in the findings above:

1. Statement of philosophy and well-conceived objectives.
2. Interdisciplinary approach to identification and diagnosis of mentally retarded children.
3. Committee evaluation of individual cases before the decision to enroll is made.
4. Adequate physical facilities and instructional equipment, supplies and plans.
5. Personal and professional competencies on the part of teachers of classes for mentally retarded children.
6. Maintenance of wholesome school-community relationships.
7. Local school district and local school responsibilities in the organization and administration of special programs for the mentally retarded.
8. Periodic evaluative efforts.

C. Culminating Observations and Recommendations

There are a number of observations which are worth noting at this point, despite the fact that they are not enumerated among the "major" findings of this study.

For example, while a majority of the retarded children enrolled in the special classes studied were thought by their teachers to have effected an encouraging adjustment, in certain cases parents continued to express a reluctance to recognize the value of special education provisions for their children. These parental reactions apparently stem from a lack of adequate knowledge concerning the mentally retarded child, his needs, and the value of the school program. Such reactions suggest a more adequate program for parental orientation regarding special education provi-

sions for mentally retarded children.

Secondly, certain of the teachers' classroom procedures showed: (1) a lack of "professional tact" relative to the handling of disciplinary problems, (2) weaknesses regarding well-organized and well-conceived instructional activities, (3) deficiencies with regard to professional and/or background experiences suitable to employment as a teacher of special classes at the elementary school level.

It is the feeling of the writer that such teachers may have elected to enter the field of Special Education because of possible weaknesses on their part which may have blocked their progress in the "regular" sphere of public education. Such possibilities are disheartening in that they suggest that there are those who have not yet recognized that teachers of exceptional children should perhaps possess qualities and competencies of an even higher calibre than those required of regular teachers.

This should not be misconstrued to suggest that a large proportion of the teachers contacted during this investigation are weak; to the contrary, most of them appeared to be quite effective and efficient. Some of them were highly praised by their principals and supervisors and exhibited outstanding professional qualifications and

results as teachers of retarded children. A measure of their dedication to the services they have chosen to render is reflected in such unsolicited comments as the following, which appeared on a returned questionnaire:

I commend you highly for undertaking such a project and am most grateful for your interest in our field of work. Though it is most taxing and quite tedious, I thoroughly enjoy most phases of my work.

It is my sincere wish that what I have contributed will help you and that your study will be most successful....

The following recommendations are submitted on the bases of the principal findings of this survey. It is recommended that:

1. A more thorough and comprehensive study of existing public school programs for mentally retarded children throughout the State of Texas be initiated for the purposes of both a more complete evaluation and improvement.
2. That school personnel increase their efforts to locate and examine suspected cases of mental retardation sufficiently early so that appropriate educational provisions might be offered them at an early age.
3. That in the interest of optimum social adjustment, units for mentally retarded children be situated, where

possible, in or near those schools which cater to the needs of that age group of regular students most similar to the age-range of the retarded group.

4. That the criteria for the classroom grouping of retarded children which have been proposed by the Texas Education Agency be followed scrupulously in the organization of special units.

5. That improved efforts of orienting the parents of retarded children to the needs of their offspring and to the value of special school programs for them be made. It is felt that this is necessary if parents are to obtain the insights required to make an adequate adjustment to the situation confronting them.

Local community councils might be established or strengthened, and current literature on various aspects of the problems incident to mental retardation might be made available more readily.

6. That in cases where educators have not utilized effectively the services of school or clinical psychologists and other types of specialists affiliated with community clinics, efforts be made to incorporate them as a part of the "team" that is responsible for the diagnosis of mentally retarded children.

7. That more attention be directed toward the establishment of year-round recreational programs for mentally retarded children, in that it is important for every child to have full, rich recreational experiences since play and physical exercise are a significant part of the whole process of growing up.

8. That consideration be given to the organization of more adequate occupational experiences for older groups of retarded individuals who could conceivably profit from these provisions.

9. That in instances where philosophies of Special Education have not yet been placed in written form, earnest efforts be made to do so in the interest of a more effective program.

10. That wherever possible retarded children be involved in those aspects of the regular school program from which they might conceivably benefit, in order that their development will not be completely divorced from common human experiences so important to all-round growth.

11. That every possible effort be made to encourage publishing firms to collaborate with professional personnel in the field of Special Education in the interest of preparing a variety of instructional materials for mentally retarded children.

12. That teachers of Exceptional Children avail themselves (to a greater degree than has been the case in the past) of the many services offered by the Division of Special Education of the Texas Education Agency in the interest of more effective teaching.

As educational programs for the various types of children who constitute the American school-age population become increasingly enriched, there is the promise that the nation is moving steadily closer to the cherished ideal of equal educational opportunity for all.

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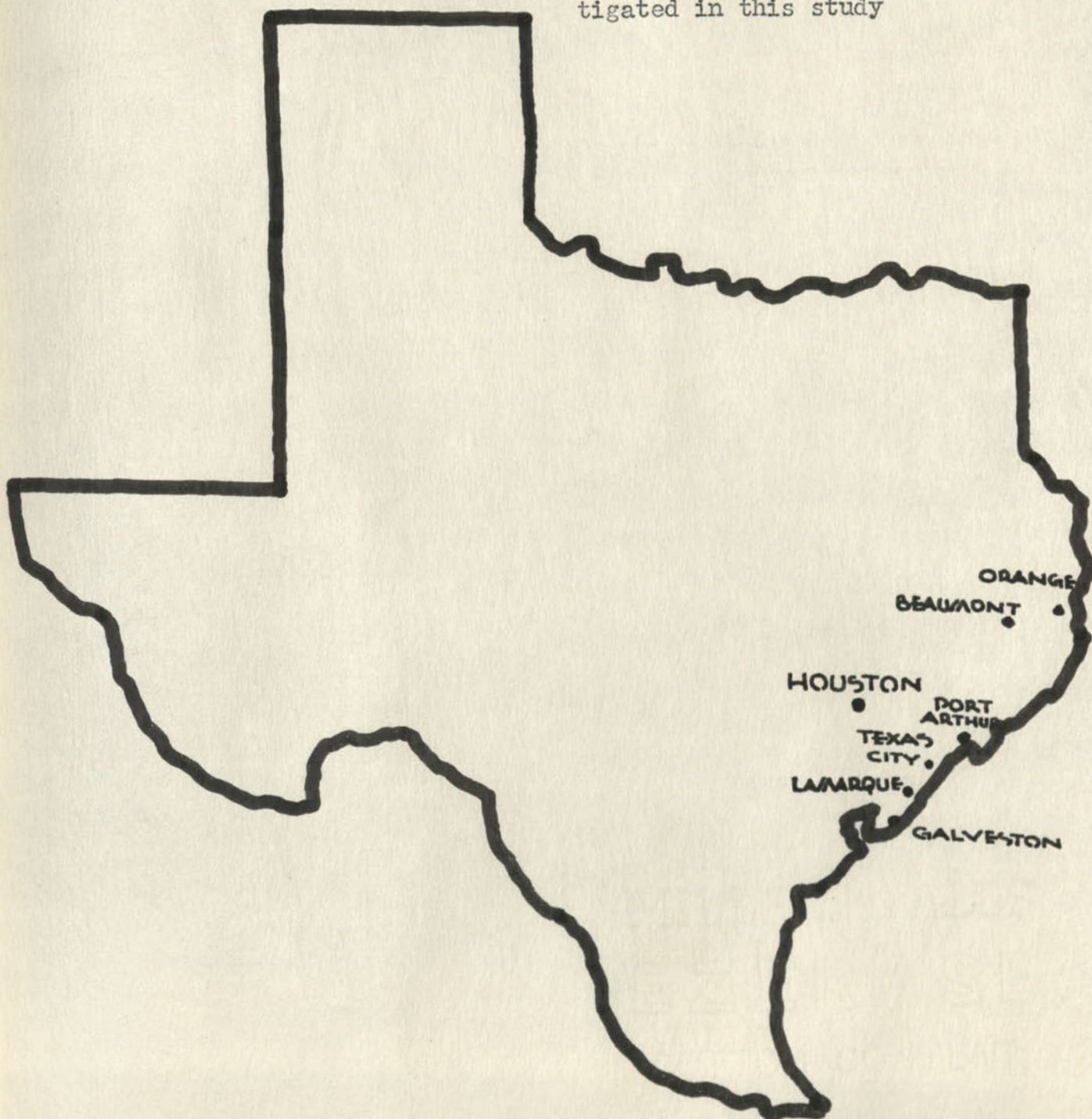
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APPENDIX

A. School Districts In Southeastern Texas With Special
Classes For Mentally Retarded Children which were inves-
tigated in this study



B. Sample Copy Of The Letter Sent To Superintendents
With Special Classes For Mentally Retarded Children

P. O. Box 2722
Prairie View A. & M. College
Prairie View, Texas
April 12, 1959

Mr. B. R. Brooks, Superintendent
Texas City Independent School District
Texas City, Texas

Dear Mr. Brooks:

I am interested in making a survey of Special Education Provisions for Mentally Retarded Children in a sampling of the elementary schools in several school districts in Southeastern Texas. The purpose of this survey is to gather data that might be used in the development of a master's thesis; one of the requirements for a Master of Science Degree at Prairie View A. & M. College, Prairie View, Texas.

This communication is designed to solicit your permission to gather useful data in your school system through the distribution of a questionnaire to teachers of mentally retarded children and through possible visitations in classroom units for the mentally retarded.

Will it also be possible for you to send me the names of the Negro Elementary Schools (and Principals) in your school district which have special provisions for mentally retarded children? Enclosed you will find a self-addressed stamped envelop to facilitate your reply.

I would greatly appreciate your giving this letter your immediate attention and consideration.

Respectfully yours,

William Joseph, Jr.

Enclosure

C. Sample Copy Of The Letter Sent To Teachers Of Special
Classes For Mentally Retarded Children

P. O. Box 2722
Prairie View A. & M. College
Prairie View, Texas
April 20, 1959

Mrs. Mary G. Brown
1011 Ellen Street
Houston, Texas

Dear Mrs. Brown:

I am in the process of making a survey of Special Education Provisions for Mentally Retarded Children in some of the elementary schools in several school districts in South-eastern Texas. The purpose of this survey is to gather data that might be used in the development of a master's thesis, one of the requirements for a Master of Science Degree at Prairie View A. & M. College, Prairie View, Texas.

This communication is designed to solicit your help in gathering useful data that might be used in the development of this thesis. More specifically, I have been granted permission to distribute the enclosed questionnaire to you and to other teachers of the mentally retarded in this area of the State.

Will it be possible for you to complete this form and return it by mail? Enclosed you will find a self-addressed stamped envelop to facilitate your return.

I would greatly appreciate your giving the questionnaire your immediate attention and consideration as it is one of the major instruments of my study.

Thank you.

Respectfully yours,

William Joseph, Jr.

Enclosure

D. Form For Recording Information Obtained During Interviews

PRAIRIE VIEW AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE

Prairie View, Texas

April, 1959

FORM I: Instrument to be used during interviews with teachers of the mentally retarded

A. DIAGNOSTIC PROCEDURES

1. What diagnostic procedures are used to identify the mentally retarded?

- (a).....tests
- (b).....referrals
- (c).....observation

(1a) Identify test specifically by name.....

2. Who assigns candidates for the special classes to them?

- (a).....teacher
- (b).....psychometrist
- (c).....principal
- (d).....committee
- (e).....others

(2aa) Upon what criteria is eligibility based?.....
.....

3. To what extent are parents consulted?.....
.....

B. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND MATERIALS

1. Is there a statement of objectives or philosophy relative to the Special Educational Program for the Mentally Retarded?.....
.....
.....

2. What classroom facilities are used? (regular classroom, "improvised areas," Special rooms)

.....No. of unitsSize of units
 (pupils)

3. What types of classroom activities and instructional procedures are utilized in the program for the mentally retarded?

(3a) Art.....
 (3b) Music.....
 (3c) Recreation.....
 (3d) Social Studies.....
 (3e) Language Arts.....
 (3f) Other.....

4. To what extent do the mentally retarded take part in the "regular" educational extra curricular program of the school?

(4a) Membership in clubs.....
 (4b) Participation in school athletics.....
 (4c) Attendance at special assemblies.....
 (4d) Cafeteria services.....

5. Who is responsible for?.....and
 how is evaluation effected?.....

(5a) Reaction of:

Mentally retarded.....
 Parents.....
 School personnel.....

C. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

1. What requirements must teachers meet before they are given assignments with the mentally retarded? (Professional and Personal competencies).....

2. What special financial items are involved...
and how are they arranged for? (Sources of
funds and authority for their expenditure)..
.....
.....
3. Is there a Director of Special Education for
the school district?.....
4. What type of supervision is offered at the
district level?.....
.....
5. Does your program parallel State Department
standards for organization, and administration.
.....
6. How adequate do you feel your program is?.....
.....

School.....

Teacher.....

Interviewed by.....

Date.....

E. Questionnaire For Teachers of Mentally Retarded Children

PRAIRIE VIEW AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE

Prairie View, Texas

April, 1959

FORM II: Questionnaire for teachers of the mentally retarded (Part of a thesis study)

A. DATA ON MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN

1. What is your definition of mentally retarded, or what criteria are used in identifying mentally retarded children in your community?
 - (a) Trainable mentally retarded.....
 -
 - (b) Educable mentally retarded.....
 -
2. How does your school locate the mentally retarded child? (Please check) through:
 - (a) Local parent groups.....
 - (b) Medical and/or psychological clinics.....
 - (c) School nurse.....
 - (d) Superintendent.....
 - (e) Supervisor.....
 - (f) Other.....
3. Is a cumulative record for each child kept up to date? yes.... no....
4. Where are these records kept?.....
5. Are copies of the following reports filed in the cumulative record folder?

(a) Tests.....	(e) Physical examination...
(b) Referrals.....	(f) Supervisor.....
(c) Social worker.....	(g) Family history.....
(d) Parent consent.....	(h) Visiting teacher.....

- (i) Counselor.....
 - (j) Teacher's observations regarding:
 - (1) Academic work.....
 - (2) Child's behavior.....
 - (3) Other reports.....
6. How many children per class day do you have?
EMR..... TMR..... Length of time children are
in school? EMR..... TMR.....
7. What physical or behavioral characteristics are
noticable in your classroom?
- (a) Mongolism (slant eyes, large tongue, etc)....
 - (b) Microcephalism (small head).....
 - (c) Hydrocephalism (large head).....
 - (d) Dwarfism.....
 - (e) Convulsive seizures.....
 - (f) Other.....
8. Do the mentally retarded children with whom you
work seem to enjoy and look forward to their
classroom experiences?
- (a) Not appreciably....
 - (b) To some extent.....
 - (c) Definitely.....
9. What type of adjustment have the regular students
made to their mentally retarded schoolmates?
- (a) Poor.....
 - (b) Fair.....
 - (c) Good.....
 - (d) Excellent.....
10. What appear to be the chief causes of the defec-
tive mental conditions with which you are concerned?
- (a) Brain damage.....
 - (b) Microcephalism...
 - (c) Hydrocephalism...
 - (d) Paralysis...
 - (e) Hereditary...
 - (f) Cretinism...
 - (g) Mongolism...

B. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS, MATERIALS AND FACILITIES

1. Check the needs or objectives which your class-

room is designed to meet.

- (a) Language development.....
 - (b) Self-care.....
 - (c) Physical training.....
 - (d) Social adjustment.....
 - (e) Economic-occupational usefulness.....
2. Do you employ the teaching-learning unit as an instructional aid?.....
 3. Are lesson plans prepared and used?.....
 4. Do your classroom learning activities involve:
 - (a) Creative art work.....
 - (b) Musical activities.....
 - (c) Play and recreation.....
 - (d) Periods for rest.....
 - (e) Language skills.....
 - (f) Number work.....
 - (g) Social refinement.....
 - (h) Personal hygiene
 - (i) Usefulness to the group.....
 - (j) Character development.....
 - (k) Other.....
 5. Please describe briefly the types of units you utilize.....
 6. Who is responsible for instructional evaluation?and how is evaluation effected?.....
 7. Check classroom facilities that are used?
 - (a) Regular classroom.....
 - (b) Improvised area.....
 - (c) Special units.....
 - (d) Other.....
 8. Check special equipment you have in your classroom or unit.

....Standup tablesTelephone
....Desk tablesTelevision
....Posture chairsRadio

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
|Cot and/or cots |Maps |
|Desk (teacher) |Art and Craft materials |
|Chair (Teacher) |Library books |
|Album of records |Chart table |
|Sand table |Flannel board |
|Globe | |
|Toys | |
|View-Master and films | |
|Toilets and lavatory | |
|Storage space | |
|Clock and clock faces | |
|Racks for books and charts | |
|Bulletin and chalkboards | |
|File that can be locked (teacher) | |
|Record player with speed regulator | |
|Film strip machine w/films | |
|Projection machine and films | |
|Blocks (all sizes and shapes) | |
|Sink and counter (hot and cold water) | |
|Educational games | |
|Science equipment | |
|Portfolio of pictures | |
|Pocket chart | |
|Standard typewriter | |
|Other:..... | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

C. ADMINISTRATIVE-PROFESSIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Has the special education program been well received by the principal and school staff?...
2. Who is your immediate supervisor (Coordinator for Special Education, etc)?.....
3. Sources of revenue and/or instructional aids for Special Education.....
4. Extent of parental - community interest.

(a).....PoorGood
(b).....FairExcellent

5. Is there an active local association for exceptional children?....
6. What professional qualifications do you possess as a teacher of the mentally retarded?
 - (a)....Provisional certification as a teacher of the mentally retarded
 - (b)....Professional certification as a teacher of the mentally retarded
7. What experiences or courses have you not had relative to professional certification in the area of the mentally retarded?
 - (a)....12 semester hours in elementary education
 - (b)....Completion of around 27 semester hours in the content courses required for teachers in elementary schools
 - (c)....6 semester hours of preparation directly related to the total program of special education, such as survey course, test and measurements, and speech correction
 - (d)....6 semester hours of work directly related to teaching retarded children
 - (e)....6 semester hours in directed teaching which should include actual practice teaching of retarded children, or acceptable practice teaching in elementary grades
 - (f)....Others.....
8. What professional experiences or courses have you had in special education?
 - (a)....Survey course in the Education of Exceptional Children
 - (b)....Problems and Methods of Teaching Mentally Retarded
 - (c)....Introduction to Speech Correction
 - (d)....Adjustment of Teaching for Exceptional Children
 - (e)....Diagnostic and Remedial Treatment of Elementary School Subjects
 - (f)....Child Growth and Development
 - (g)....Test and Measurement
 - (h)....Curriculum Building For Mentally Retarded

9. Are you certified in any other area(s) of special education?
- (a).....Orthopedic (d).....Deaf
(b).....Speech (e).....Other
(c).....Vision
10. Name of institution(s) attended for certification
.....
11. Year granted certification(s).....
12. Degrees held.....
13. How many years of regular teaching experiences have you had?.....
14. How many years of teaching experiences with mentally retarded children have you had?.....
15. Do you enjoy freedom to prepare your own instructional activities?.....
16. Do you have access to and read relatively regularly any of the following professional periodicals?
- (a).....Exceptional children
(b).....Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders
(c).....Journal of Mental Deficiency
(d).....Sight Saving Review
(e).....Cerebral Palsy Review
(f).....The Crippled Child
(g).....Mental Hygiene
17. What national, regional, or local agencies have expressed an interest in and supported your Education Programs? (Please list)
- (a).....
(b).....
(c).....
(d).....
18. To what extent do you participate in professional meetings with colleagues in the field of Special Education?

- (a)....Not at all (c)....Weekly
 (b)....Once a month (d)....(Other).....

19. Have you received unsolicited evaluative comments from:

- (a)....The students with whom you work
 (b)....School officials
 (c)....Parents

20. In your opinion, has your work with mentally retarded youngsters resulted in any tangible improvements?

- (a)....No (c)....To a large extent
 (b)....To a small extent (d)....yes, very difinitely

21. Do you feel that you are adequately paid as a teacher in the area of Special Education?
 yes..... no.....

22. Have you received any formal evaluative statement from state or local school official? (Please specify).....

General Location of School (or specific address):

.....

*Name of school:.....

*Name of teacher:.....

*OPTIONAL